CORADDI

WINTER

FEB 9 1951
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Under Cover

This time it means that literally—under cover. Not that we just got important. Very subservient to make-up editor, do what she says.

CORADDI in this issue publishes the winning story and poem of the Campus Creative Contest, staged during November last fall. The contest board, representing all the major departments on campus (except English) and headed by Nancy Ijames as chairman, chose these from your submissions. Comments from Nancy: "The stories were few, the poems many. We did our best. Merry Christmas." CORADDI staff members, who were disqualified from the contest, were very happy to discover a new campus writer in VIRGINIA JANE HARRIS, freshman, the author of the winning story, "Old Mrs. Dunhill," and also, incidentally, of the runner-up, a story that is being considered for publication in a later issue. The staff was also nicely flattered at the winning poet, MONTAE IMBT, whom we published last fall.

As for us, we picked three stories on our own hook—ambitious of us since one of them had to be left over for another issue because of the make-up (I know, we've only got twenty pages this time, but it still wouldn't work.) Perhaps it calls for a little statement of policy as to why—because it is a good story. CORADDI is an undergraduate literary magazine. We have in the past and will in the future publish graduate work—but the undergraduate stories come first. And so they did this time . . . LUCY PAGE, a writing workshop student and a junior, publishes for the first time in CORADDI with "Patricia's Mother," the story of a girl who doesn't want to go to college (wants to get married, and does), and her mother who can't believe it. MARILYN ROBINETTE, an advanuced composition student, also publishes in CORADDI for the first time with "Damp Leaves Won't Crackle," a subtle story of a boy's tragedy.

And the art—Wendy Ward is weeping just now because a certain clown with big feet didn't fit in the make-up, either. (Wendy is fond of clowns, you know, obviously.) But we have jugglers, abstracts, a little man on a bicycle, and a clown's head. (No, that isn't Dehoney's picture on page nine—it's a clown's head. But it goes with the subject—DEHONEY'S typically Dehoney record of what it feels like to be associated with CORADDI for six years . . .)

MARY IDOL has done an excellent, really professional, job in her review of Lettie Rogers' new novel, *The Storm Cloud*. Mrs. Rogers is another product of the "college patronage system" we talked about last fall . . . The feature, "Robert Penn Warren," is an introduction to the outstanding novelist and poet who will be on campus in March to criticize student prose and poetry for the eighth annual Arts Forum . . .

And, yes, Arts Forum—a gala occasion for the student writers (who are in ecstasy over Warren), dance, art, music, and drama. And a bit sad—for this (the dead of winter issue) is the last the old staff puts out (and we got all those things left over, too). So, weeping and dripping our tears on the pasted-up—at last!—dummy . . . Valedictorially yours,

J. M.

WINTER ISSUE
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CORADDI

WOMAN'S COLLEGE *of the* UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
Greensboro, N. C.

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Campus Creative Contest Winning Story---

Old Mrs. Dunhill

by Virginia Jane Harris

MRS. DUNHILL sat in her garden and watched the sun come up. It had been the same ever since she could remember. First, there was the light, clear and yellow and watery, then rising above the yellow washed hills came the sun. Mrs. Dunhill stretched and closed her eyes. It was so warm and comfortable sitting here in her garden. Her home lay behind her and circling close were the hills and the valleys of the Kingdom. She sat very still for a moment, feeling the solid shapes of familiar things all around her. Then she put her thin old hands on the arms of the wooden chair and lifted herself to her feet. It was nearly time for breakfast. She started slowly up the hill to the house, while an early morning breeze pushed the baggy overalls closer to her legs and flipped the sleeves of the old sweater she wore shawl-like with the top button fastened under her chin.

As she stepped between the beds of lupin and mallow she lifted her head to gaze at her house. The long, rangy building had been there for years and years, as long as the oldest inhabitant of the village of Kingdom could remember. Old Mr. Dunhill, the founder of the clan, had been one of the earliest settlers. He'd built the house at a distance from the Kingdom, for he wasn't a friendly person. His family had grown up self-sufficient and cut off by their father from the easy friendliness of the village. They'd lived there farming and running sheep on the steep hills around the place and raising the prettiest garden for miles around. Then the young folks had gotten tired of farming, of the lack of society, and they'd moved off, one by one, until the old man and Mrs. Dunhill's husband had been the only ones left. The old man had watched his family wander off to Boston and Lewiston and it had almost broken his obstinate heart. But he'd kept the farm going until he died. Then old Mrs. Dunhill's husband had carried on, working the farm all by himself, trying to make a living and keeping just as far away from the villagers as his father had done before him. Then he'd died from sheer overwork and Mrs. Dunhill was left all by herself.

She could remember as clear as day how her husband had died, and that was odd because she couldn't remember much of anything any more, especially when she tried. But every time one of the townfolks came to pay their respects or one of the Dewey boys dropped by with the firewood or supplies she would lead them up into the house, through the old kitchen and into the old-fashioned living room.

"I remember it as if it happened yesterday," she would say. "He was standing right here by the window trying to pull the shade up to see the hills out there. And then it took him. Dr. Jane said it was his heart, but I don't know. He was old. He crumpled up over the rocker and mumbled something and he was gone. Sudden, just like that." Then she would nod a little and her eyes would go off somewhere. And, if it were Abner Dewey with the firewood, he would shake Mrs. Dunhill's loose old fingers from his sleeve and say, "We all have to go sometime, Mrs. Dunhill. Do you want me to carry some of that wood in here?"

"No, thank you, Abner," Mrs. Dunhill would say. "It's all right; I can manage it." And then she'd sit in the creaky old rocker and begin humming softly to herself some song she'd learned a long time ago.

Abner would drop some kindling into the high, slant-topped woodbox and say goodbye. Mrs. Dunhill never looked up, though. She would go on rocking and humming as if no one were there.

One day Abner went home to his wife and said, "Louise, hon', we've got to do something about old Mrs. Dunhill. She is much too old to be livin' there all by herself and I do b'lieve she's getting a little off her rocker. She'll set fire to herself or something some night."

Louise was a chubby, cheerful little body, a little too curious but good hearted for all of that, and she shook her head as she wrung out the dish rag and dropped it on the rack over the stove to dry.

"You know how she is, Abner. It would take more than our talking to get her away from that old house. I've thought about her a lot, the poor old thing. I just know she would be happier living around with the families of the village, but you could never convince her of it. She's such a private person. Maybe we could get old Dr. Jane to talk to her, though. Lord, Abner, I never thought of that! You and me are going to see him this very evening. Go get your coat and I'll see to the children."

And they had gone to see Dr. Jane and talked with him. He'd thought it over a long time and finally said that he would see what he could do. And today was the last day at home for old Mrs. Dunhill . . . .

The old lady pushed the scarred shed door open and stepped into the sunlit doorway. Through the shed and past dim shapes of furniture and boxes of clothes she walked, then climbed the sagging stairs to the kitchen. The sun was shining in a long row

Editor's Note: This story was chosen by the members of the Campus Creative Contest board, representing all the major departments, except English, and disqualifying Coraddi staff members from entrance. The winning poem appears on Page 5.

of windows and the whole kitchen had a happy, comfortable look. The fire in the big stove across the room snapped cheerfully and the teapot was steaming and whistling. Mrs. Dunhill moved slowly across the kitchen and picked up the dancing lid. There would be enough for a morning cup of tea, with some left over. She lifted an egg-shell cup down from the high, old-fashioned cupboard with the fancy *D* carved in its doors and put a level teaspoon of tea leaves into it. There was no need to be careful of the good china. She couldn't live much longer and Ted, the brother-in-law in Boston, had a wife who hated old things. She hadn't heard from the family in Lewiston in years, but *that* brother-in-law had always been contemptuous of the frail cups and plates that were her pride and joy.

She started stirring her tea, thinking about what Dr. Jane had said to her. She knew she was going somewhere today for a visit, but for the life of her she couldn't recall where or why. But Dr. Jane had said it would be all right. He had told her to pack some clothes, but she was sure she wouldn't need them on a short visit. Then the whole thing slipped her mind. She had some work to do this morning. It was getting on winter and the plants had to be covered and the lupins tied back. The two yellow rose bushes needed to be pruned, too, for they had started to choke out a bed of mallow that her father-in-law had planted.

She could not think why she had let them go so long. When you got older it seemed as if time didn't matter any more. And it went so quickly! She was scarce able to take a good, deep breath before summer smoldered into fall, before fall frosted over and became winter.

She left the cup of steaming tea on the sturdy kitchen table and went out to the shed to get her trowel and clippers. It was really too early for breakfast and tea wasn't good on an empty stomach. Not an old one, anyway. The shed door swung shut behind her and she circled up the hill to the garden. She liked having her garden in the back. It was more private that way and the people who really wanted to see it wouldn't mind coming a little way.

The mallow were blooming in tall clumps and the odd Chinese plant that her husband's father had set out stood tall above them, pointing its long, red sword flowers at the sky. Most of the grass was short, for she had managed to keep it cut with her clippers, but the pennyroyal was almost buried in a thick matt of green blades. Why, the garden was in a tangle. She knelt in a soft place and began clipping around the pennyroyal. Picking a leaf, she crushed it between two fingers. It smelled sharp and piny. She loved her garden so. She smiled and the long folds of her cheeks pushed up into suede curves. She loved the lilac bushes that grew against the walls of the house and the evergreens that she had planted in a soldier-like row down the hill. She slipped the pennyroyal into her mouth and began clipping again. The leaf tasted bitter, but it was such a real sensation.

The sun had climbed high in the sky and was just about to slide down the other side when Mrs. Dunhill rose from her knees and started for the house. She hurried around the corner of the house and up into the kitchen. The water in the pot had boiled away and the bottom was burned black. Oh, well, she would have to do without tea, but there was bread and a few eggs. She plopped one into a small pot and sat down to wait for it to boil. The sun was on the other side of the house now, and it threw squares of gold across the wide, uneven floor boards. She stared at the floor and the squares of gold grew and grew, then seemed to lift themselves from the floor and wrap warmly around her bent old body. She sat still and began humming a song that she had learned a long time ago. Then she got up suddenly and the squares of gold spilled back to their proper places on the floor. She quickly crossed the kitchen floor and paused at the parlor door. The window was straight across from her and she stared out. There were the hills, blue-green in the afternoon light and grooved with black scars that were the hollows and the ravines.

"If he had been able to raise the shade he would have seen the hills," she whispered. She hurried over to the window and settled herself in the old rocking chair. "I'll look for him."

She looked and rocked and hummed to herself and then fell into the easy slumber of age. Her white hair trailed over her cheek and her head bent gently to the back of the rocker. She sighed once. Then the room was still except for the far-off bubbling of the water in the pot, except for the whisper of the sun moving across the kitchen floor.

Late in the afternoon a wagon pulled up at the gate at the bottom of the hill and two men got out. Dr. Jane shrugged his shoulders to straighten his coat and began the long climb. He motioned to Abner.

"Coming, Dr. Jane."

The two men climbed up the rutted road, threads of fine grass brushing against their legs and the sun striking full in their faces.

"Sure does get hot on this hill in the afternoon, don't it, Doc?" Abner rubbed the heel of his hand over his forehead. "Say, do you suppose we're going to have any trouble with the old lady? She's always been kind of set on staying here."

"No worry, Abner. I'll talk to her," gasped the doctor. "This is right steep going and I'm not as young as I used to be. You trot ahead and see where she is."

Abner started up the hill with long steps. He reached the house and pushed open the shed door. "I'm not so sure I want to see Mrs. Dunhill, now," he said to himself. "Reckon I'll take her box down instead. She's in the house, I can smell something burning on. Guess these are the boxes. She won't

(Continued on Page 5)

Winning Poem . . .

The Candle

by MONTAE IMBT

One candle of eternity is yours;
Yours to light and then burn quickly to its end—
Or yours to save within a lasting torch.
To live — to die — as must we all—
But not to pass from here without a sign,
Without a light, that coming feet may see the way.

If only God would take my tallow twist
And breathe onto its wick a real desire —
Desire, not for the fleeting, earthly goals,
But for knowledge — the sole enduring honor man
can earn.
For it alone can shine across the Deep
To say to minds and feet of coming years:
"Heed my light; I, too, have passed this way!"

Old Mrs. Dunhill

(Continued from Page 4)

need more'n one, though. I'll take this one." He picked up one of the boxes in the shed and started back down the hill. He met the doctor at the mallow bed.

"She's in the house, Doc. I'll carry this box down."

Dr. Jane walked into the kitchen, puffing a little.

"Heavenly days!" he said out loud in astonishment. "What's she been doing?" He hurried over to the stove and looked into the smoking pot. The black mess on the bottom threw up a smell that nearly brought tears to his eyes. Then he looked up through the parlor door. "Why, she's gone to sleep and let her supper burn on." He started through the door. "Poor old thing! Maybe she'd be better not living by herself. I hope so."

He shook her gently by the shoulder. The old lady started and woke up instantly, as the old do.

"Why, Dr. Jane," she smiled up at him, "how nice of you to come and visit."

"This really isn't a social call, Martha," he said, smiling back at her. "We've come to take you on your visit. Are you all ready? Abner's taken your box down to the wagon. Here, I'll help you." He lifted her out of the chair and settled her on her feet.

"Yes, I'm ready," she said. "But I'll be back by nightfall, won't I?"

The doctor looked at her a moment with a frown wrinkling his bushed eyebrows. "It may be, my dear."

They started through the kitchen, Mrs. Dunhill clinging to Dr. Jane's arm.

"What's that smell in my kitchen?" she said sharply as they passed the kitchen table where the cup full of soggy tea leaves still sat. "Oh, dear, I've let that egg burn on. You wait a minute while I put a little water in the pot."

"Not now, Martha, it will be all right."

Mrs. Dunhill looked up at the doctor. "If you say so." And she clung a little tighter as they went down the kitchen steps.

They went out of the shed and started down the long hill. Mrs. Dunhill looked around. "I'll have to prune those roses tomorrow. Father would be so angry if he could see them. I'll do it tomorrow."

Abner was waiting at the foot of the hill, ready to go.

"Climb in, Mrs. Dunhill. Watch your step, those sideboards are kind of high for an old lady," he said.

Mrs. Dunhill stepped over and pulled her overalls down to her ankles. "We'll stop and see Louise, won't we, Doctor?" she asked.

"You'll see Louise, all right," grinned Abner.

Martha smiled then, and turned her head to look up the hill at her house.

"Look, Doctor. The sun's setting right behind the house and it looks as if it is on fire. But it is not. It seems very black with the sunset so red behind it. I'll *have* to see to those roses tomorrow."

The wagon pulled off along the mountain road and circled a hill. The sun fell at last and the house stood, black and long and rangy, against a bare, white sky.

Patricia's Mother

by Lucy Page

"I WONDER if I'll get there first today." Patricia breathed heavily as she threw her weight on the heavy schoolhouse door and ran out.

"Oh, please don't let Mother get there first, please." Words that Patricia scarcely knew were present spilled out between short gasps that came between the jolts of her long steps.

Miss Watson will be angry because I'm going to be late to history again, she thought, but I don't care. If I get there first, it will be worth it. Patricia was all the way down the schoolhouse hill now, waiting for Mr. Crider's Ford to hurry on so she could cross. She knew if her mother were ahead of her waiting in the post office she would be late to history in vain. It was a shame her mother had to read all the mail, including the pieces that weren't addressed to her.

Patricia wondered if her trip would be disappointing. Everything seemed to slow down her progress—Mrs. Adams' little children, the street light, and finally the men standing in the door. It would be bad, she thought, if the trip weren't worth the trouble.

Today she was lucky; her mother was not in the post office. Quickly as possible she spun the combination and reached inside the box. There were three letters. One of them had a window envelope. "That will stay till Daddy gets it," Patricia said to herself. "Mother doesn't like bills." She put it back with one of the other letters without even reading the address. The third she held with trembling fingers while she stared at her name on the front. She slowly walked out of the post office happy as she opened the letter and began to read. Then she heard the bell ring, and remembered school. Realizing she was late already, she put her letter in her pocket and started to run. Five minutes later she was in history.

"Patricia!"

"Ma'am?"

"Have you any logical excuse for being late this time?"

"No, Miss Watson."

"Well, I'll see you here after school, if you don't mind."

"Yes, ma'am."

Patricia, still panting from breathlessness and delight, opened the letter under the desk and put it into her notebook. There was only one page to it, so it could be read hurriedly. The letter was from Dan Culbreth, the boy she planned to marry. She could not resist re-reading the ending of the letter. "It was, my darling, only a month ago tonight I kissed you goodbye. Now I wish with all my heart I could kiss you again in greeting. Until I am able to do so, I send all my love, Dan."

Feeling Miss Watson's eyes upon her, Patricia reluctantly forced herself to open the history book and try to catch up with the class discussion. She was glad she had beaten her mother to the post office. Now Mrs. Williams need not read this letter. She need not know it had ever come. After all, thought Patricia, my mail was my own personal property and it should be private.

After school, Miss Watson did exactly what Patricia expected her to do; she kept her a minute to tell her that the tardiness had become a habit and "something must be done about it." Patricia felt sure Miss Watson knew about the letter and why she had been late today as well as other days. She was also pretty sure the whole town knew, the same way all towns know everything that concerns their members. When she left the classroom, she felt Miss Watson was assured she would continue to be late to history.

Bounding through the door of her house, Patricia hummed a tune of satisfaction. She had her letter and she had it all to herself. She threw down her books in the living room with an unusual carelessness as her mother came from the bedroom. Patricia looked at her mother and decided she was sloppy. There just wasn't any use in it. Her hose were down, wrinkled around her ankles; her hair was coming loose from the combs about her head; and her dress was only partly buttoned. Patricia was filled with disgust as she looked at her mother, fat and slow.

"I left the breakfast dishes in the sink for you to do. I just didn't feel well enough to do them," Mrs. Williams drawled in greeting.

"All right, Mother. I'll do them now."

"After you finish you can straighten up in here a little. I've been to town and I just didn't have time to do the housework. I'm too tired to do it now."

"Yes, Mother." Patricia started to leave the room, but she noticed her mother thumbing through her books.

"Mother, what are you doing?"

"When I went to the post office this morning there were two letters in the box."

"Three," Patricia corrected mentally; then she remembered the third was a business letter, probably a bill and they didn't count as letters to her mother.

"One was to you and the other to your daddy. I left them there while I went for the groceries. When I came back there was just your father's letter. I'm looking for the other one. Ah, here it is."

Mrs. Williams had the letter. She calmly took it from the envelope and unfolded it. Patricia, overcome with anger, flew at her treasure and snatched the letter from her mother's hands.

"Give it to me, it's mine! I want it — it's none of your business! I won't let you read it!"

"Patricia, let me have that letter this minute. It's bad enough to have that unchristian young man writ-

ing you, but it's twice as bad when his letters aren't fit to be read. Give it back to me now!"

"I won't, I won't, I won't!"

Mrs. Williams came alive with anger. All remnants of the slow sluggishness in her a minute ago seemed to melt and fall off. "Why don't you let me read that letter? Is there something in it you are ashamed of?"

"No, but my mail is mine, and I don't want you or anyone else to read it."

"Nothing, nothing is yours except what your father and I choose to give you. Everything else is ours except what you have been given by us. So, give me that letter!"

"No!"

"You know Daddy and I know what's best for you, don't you? Are you doubting that? How dare you! Give it to me!"

In a climaxing fit of rage, Mrs. Williams snatched Patricia's hair in violent jerks, pulling her head sideways almost to her waist. Caught off guard, Patricia yelled, dropped the letter, and reached her hands toward her mother's wrists.

Mrs. Williams picked up the letter with a slow bend of her body and read it while Patricia, seeing herself defeated, threw herself on the sofa and cried.

"What's this he said at the end?"

"It's none of your business!"

"None of my business, eh? I like the nerve of this young fellow telling you he wished he could kiss you now! Has he ever kissed you more than this once he talks about?"

"I won't answer."

"Then he has. To think of a daughter of mine, one I had tended to and brought up to be a Christian in a Christian home would ever let a young upstart do this to her—to ruin her. What are we going to do?"

"Mother, I'm in love with Dan, and I intend to marry him."

"And I intend for you to go to college, Miss. I don't mean maybe. You were accepted today, you know."

"No, I didn't know, and I don't care now that I do know. I'm not going. I'm going to marry Dan this summer."

"Not without your Daddy's consent and mine."

"I will, too. Have you ever heard of Georgia? If you haven't, just ask anybody around here."

Mrs. Williams wasn't listening; she was taking the crumpled letter that she was still holding and tearing it in half. The bottom half, the half Patricia cherished, was put in the stove.

"Anyway," said Mrs. Wiliams, "no stranger will ever know what cheap love my daughter has been getting in the mail. We've got to keep this disgrace in the family."

Patricia still heard the iron of the stove lid ringing in her ears as she sat numb, brooding over her injustice. She stayed there until her mother's voice reminded her of the breakfast dishes and the dirty house.

Things were harder on Patricia from that day on. She only existed her daily life. She hated the person who had said that youth was beautiful and love was grand. They weren't, either; youth and love were devices to kill the soul, so old age would be placid pettiness. She didn't have to bother to go to the post office any more, for now Mrs. Williams made it a point to be at the box when the mail was put in. Every day Patricia would find her letter opened on the mantel. Every day she gritted her teeth to realize that her love letters were shared by someone else, someone cold on the subject. It was not even unusual for sentences to be carefully cut out and thrown away. Patricia wondered why her mother hated Dan so.

Her duty as a daughter made her try to justify her mother. She realized the hard fact that Mrs. Williams was nearing her sixties. It was harder on her parents to be regular parents because they had been married nineteen years before she had come.

One night her father told her that he had gotten the receipt from the college for her registration.

"Well, you can send back for it, Daddy. I'm not going to college; I'm going to get married this summer to Dan."

Mrs. Williams raised her head from the newspaper and said, "You're going to college." There was no doubt in her voice, and she resumed reading the paper immediately.

Patricia found assurance in her father's wink and did not answer, preferring to let the matter drop.

The next day Patricia and her mother were in town shopping in the department store, when the salesgirl, one of Patricia's classmates, asked her: "When are you getting married, Pat?"

Mrs. Williams reared back and said positively, "Patricia has no plans for marriage. She is going to college."

Agatha, the salesgirl, looked shocked and turned for affirmation to Patricia, who stood behind her mother and shook her head. Agatha seemed to understand the gesture and turned back to the older woman.

"Where is Pat going, Mrs. Williams?"

"Oh, I told you the other day, Agatha," Patricia said with a wink. "It's where Jean and all of them go."

"Of course, I knew, I just forgot." She was talking to Mrs. Williams' back, "I'm sorry I've gotten you into trouble," she added in a hurried whisper.

"Don't worry, she'll forget," Patricia smiled and followed her mother from the store.

Mrs. Williams gradually grew used to Dan's letters. After reading them she would soon forget what they said; therefore she seldom made an issue of the contents. However, she still could not accept the fact that her daughter was not going to college as she had planned.

"I'll miss you when you're gone," she would whine.

"Yes, ma'am."

"When does it start?"

"College? I don't know, Mother; I won't be there."

And Mrs. Williams' usual convenient lack of memory always caused her to answer: "Where will you be?"

Patricia's tired response expressed itself into one word, "Married."

"But how are you going to college if you are married?"

"I'm not going to college." Patricia always hated herself for being as stubborn as her mother, but she felt she had to be as honest about the whole situation as possible. It was for this reason she bore with a peculiar kind of boredom the fuss her mother always made.

Days formed themselves into weeks, weeks into first one month and then another. Patricia survived these days, but without the happiness that young love is supposed to know. She wondered if the time would ever come when she would not be worried, for she knew her mother would miss her and need her after she was gone. Mrs. Williams' age was beginning to show more and more. She had begun to forget badly. Patricia's conscience hurt her, yet her pride refused to admit it. Saying she had a right to live her own life had little effect on her inner self.

Patricia worked hard, kept the house clean and neat, did her lessons, and tried to keep her spirits up. She fastened her mind on spring when Dan would be getting a transfer to the company's office near her home town. She and Dan had already made tentative plans for their wedding in July, but it would probably be August before everything worked out.

Her father she knew understood her wishes and in the best way he was able, without openly contradicting his wife, approved her plans. He encouraged her by listening to her troubles.

"Patty," he'd say, giving her a fatherly spank, "do as you damn well please, like I've been doing all these years. The old lady will complain, but I'll fix her," he'd add with a twinkle in his eye and a puff on his pipe. Patricia wished she had the patience to condone and accept her mother as he did. "By the way," he'd finish, "here's five dollars to buy some of those things women always think they need before they can marry."

In a crisis he could be depended on to stand up for her, but there appeared to be no clear solution for her mother. Patricia felt sure there must be an answer somewhere.

This was the situation when Dan came. His company transferred him sooner than he had expected. Now he had every weekend with Patricia. After the first weekend when he was told about Patricia's registration fee and Mr. Williams' comments on his wife's determination that Patricia go to college, it became clear to Dan that he had to court his sweetheart's mother also.

On weekends when he came, he would sit and talk to Mrs. Williams, letting her tell him over and over about the old home place and her life as a child. "When I first came to this town I had a pair of red stockings, and Zeb Ware called me 'Redwing' 'cause of those stockings." Dan would listen to the facts of Patricia's childhood attentively while she said that it was strange that Patricia had never crawled, she just started to walk, and that she cut her first tooth at six months. He suffered through the story of how she had wanted to learn to play the piano herself and now she was playing the organ at the church. He agreed with her opinion on Patricia's romances, mishaps, and misfortunes. He rejoiced at great lengths on the merits of Mrs. Williams' daughter in reference to her scholarship, her beauty, and her part in the Senior Play.

Patricia watched, jealous that so much time must be spent this way. It seemed a little ridiculous to see the old woman and the heavy-set man sitting idly chatting for hours. However, she felt at the same time proud of Dan for making the dual courtship work. Her mother obviously had a strong liking for Dan, and the liking seemed to grow each time he came. She laughed at his witty cracks, smiled at his flattering compliments, and frowned when his tone of voice indicated displeasure. Much to Patricia's amusement, she always told her company that "That nice young man Dan Culbreth came to see me this past weekend," and "Oh, how we all enjoy him so." The Sunday that Dan had joined Patricia's church, Mrs. Williams was one of the happiest women Patricia knew.

The Spring passed and Patricia and Dan made plans for August. After all, she would only be a little more than an hour's drive away. She told her mother her plans so it could not be said that they were a secret.

"Mother, Dan and I are going to be married the first of next month. We want the wedding here. May we?"

"Patricia, I've told you time and time again you are going to college. No! you cannot get married at all!"

"Mother, I'll warn you once again—we're going to be married the first week in August, either here by Mr. Swanson, or in Georgia by the first Justice of the Peace we find."

The plans spread around town, too.

"Yes, Dan and I have plans for the first of August some time, just a little more than four weeks away."

"Have you picked a day?"

"Well, no—not yet. You see, it's like this . . . .," and her voice dwindled away.

"What's your mother saying to this idea? Doesn't she want you to go to college?"

"Oh, yes, she does, but, er . . . . ," and Patricia laughed nervously.

The last week in July, Patricia was invited to her first party—a shower. When she came home with the

(Continued on Page 17)

The Everlasting Coraddi Member

by Martyvonne Dehoney

FOR some peculiar reason, the editor of Coraddi feels without heritage. Since I am an ancient member of the magazine (six years' standing) and have a reasonably sound memory, it has fallen to my lot to recreate, "to bring to life" a host of personages once connected with Coraddi. Of course, the editor does not expect the impossible. I can only speak of those I knew or know. I can only view the passage of time through my own experience, not through hearsay or some factual manual. Thus I, as court historian and scribe, will recount how they came to the throne.

When I came, as a child, to Woman's College, I had of course read the handbook. Therein it was stated that to be a Playliker was quite grand, to be on Coraddi was terrific, and to be in Quill Club was the highest literary honor one could achieve. As a freshman I could only hope that one day it might be my good fortune to be a member of one of these organizations. It was. I, by the end of my sophomore year, was in all three. As usual, the actual happening was much less exciting or exacting than the handbook had led me to believe.

Example No. 1: A sunny day on the trolley. I am going up town jammed next to two "mature" students. "Ya been down to Aycock yet?" one asks. "Yeah, it's a mess," answers the other. "Well, we'll get the freshmen to sweep it out. Eager beavers." I remember smiling. I swept.

Example No. 2: Second semester. Two Coraddi juniors came back with my roommate (Lyell Smollen) and me after lunch. One flings herself on the bed for a nap. The other sits cross-legged on the floor looking at our drawings and literary endeavors. She takes several things with her when she and her drowsy companion leave. Shortly afterwards I'm on the staff.

Example No. 3: Sophomore year by the dining halls. I meet a literary friend. "We have misplaced the membership list of Quill Club. Going to have a meeting to get organized and get something done this year. You're invited." I look puzzled. "But I've never tried out for Quill Club." "So what? You write, don't you? You should be in. Be sure to come." I did.

Enough of myself, however. I merely wanted to show my connection with these groups and will now turn to the great ones. Coraddi editor my freshman year was Jean Johnson, a slim scholarly girl who gathered a staff of red-blooded individuals about her. They were dynamic, "intense" girls. The spade's a spade type. They impressed me with their "vivid" vocabularies, enormous activity and ability to carry on over long periods of time on two to five hours of sleep a night. The war influenced the Coraddi staff and Coraddi material. Soldiers appear in many of the stories. Chance meetings and vaguely hopeless situations are popular themes. There are very few "through-the-eyes-of-a-child" type stories. The editor's page reflects the mood of the staff and of their friends. They are ready to laugh at anything, but their humor tended to be mocking. It is not fair to lump them together this way for there were some exceedingly genteel ones among them. Without these and without the wide diversity of interest each and everyone of them had, the group would have been insufferable. Here is a quote from Breaking Ground, Winter Issue, 1944:

> So the staff gathered around the table, elbows on knees, chins in palms, looking as statuesque and thoughtful as possible, and said: "What can we do with this magazine that is supposed to be so far above everybody's head? What *is* our editorial policy?"
>
> "Well, the college can educate average students to be followers if it wants to," said a pudgy artist. "We won't, absolutely can't put on a slick job full of pretty precious pieces designed to hurt no one's feelings."
>
> "No, we can't lower the standards of writing," said another. "We must try to present the best creative work on campus."
>
> "Yes, and ideas too," interrupted the Sociologist. "We want to reflect the constructive thought of students—if there is any."
>
> "Yes, but—" from the solid citizen in the far corner, "let's not put in anything *we* can't understand."
>
> "That's all right. We won't publish anything the staff doesn't understand. We aren't geniuses—if we were, we would be in trouble with the administration and most of the faculty. So if we can 'get it,' so can the campus."

Here is another excerpt from the Spring Issue of 1945:

> In a college community we are supposed, it seems, to utter profound statements and to write intellectual treatises without reaching significances. And the college literary magazine supposedly will reflect this thoughtful awareness. All of the material presented here is student work and may give the reader some insight into W. C. student thought and opinion. . . . We do feel that every sketch and story is honest; no prim little girl is handing back borrowed opinions on literature distant to her way of life, and no one is pretending to a form or theme which is considered more sophisticated or more acceptable than the one natural to her.

Johnson turned out some good issues. She had the advantage of capable writers and students whose experiences permitted them to follow the above edict and still take you to New York or Russia or the Ozarks. The cosmopolitan spirit prevailed even after graduation. When I last heard from Johnson she was in Paris—and two of her staff have just returned from long stays in Germany and Austria. A third is in Japan.

The next year I was no longer known as "the freshman." Angela Snell was editor. Whimsy and satire were her *fortes.* She wanted a second *New Yorker.* "Make it smart" was her motto. We had to have a lot of cartoons and a certain jauntiness in the issues. Here we go again:

> "Yes, but what'll it be—this policy?" piped up one of our poets from her seat on the waste basket.
>
> "How about 'If you don't understand it, it must be good.'?" suggested the Brow perched high up on the filing cabinet.
>
> "Why not something original like 'We aim to please'?" someone volunteered.
>
> "We aim to please," we repeated this novel phrase to ourselves. "That's it!"

Well, I suppose we tried. I can remember once when I failed. Tangled with a leading student in the physical education department because of a simple cartoon depicting a three-legged girl walking on campus and another girl telling a friend that she had decided to major in P. E. "Just what did you mean by that?" I gave the girl a Donald Duck smile and hastened to reassure her . . . showing her my third leg as proof of my statement.

Much whimsy and satire that year—even at staff meetings. Lots of hot stories, too. Well, it was the end of the war and we had lost Roosevelt. Angela had a good staff. There was Nancy Siff who spent a good deal of time examining her conscience, and Betty Waite, an army brat. (She had "travelled.") Nancy Sutton certainly knew the Southern regions and Southern temperament. Mildred "I'd-like-to-own-a-bakery" Rodgers created diligently and provided us young-uns with the maternal atmosphere (her language was spotless and she did not smoke or drink).

My junior year Virginia McKinnon was editor. The staff faces had changed. Lucy Rodgers, Mildred's sister, was poetry editor, Lib Jobe art editor. Nancy Siff and I were still Literary staff members with the addition of Ann Shuffler and Barbara Pelton and an amazingly funny girl named Nancy Edwards (she didn't stay long but she left her mark). There were other changes. The magazine was no longer slick throughout. We started having photographs as features. We had a modest Thumbing Through rather than Breaking Ground (change of attitude?) There were no apologies or *raison d'etres.* We had book reviews.

From Virginia: "If we were looking for the best campus creative effort, we would turn to the faculty, but we are concerned with student effort. That Coraddi will include unfinished attempts at 'works of art' we are sure. To us, the attempt is important."

As for Quill Club . . . you will remember my infiltration into that organization my sophomore year. Some meetings were held in a strange little room in Students' Building (nevermore, unquoth). My junior year in Quill Club was an active one. I sold sandwiches once a week with Lib Fant. Our circuit was Mary Foust, New Guilford and McIver House. Quill Club had a "cause." Not that I couldn't have used the money . . . We little ones . . . Shuffie, Nancy Siff, Marjean Perry and I were coming into our own in our respective fields. Nancy wrote poetry, considered world events very carefully and managed to elope and keep up with her studies all at once. Marjean was vacillating about her major interest—writing or painting, painting or writing . . . Shuffie was alternately sullen and cheerful, "living and partly living." I had developed a fondness for solitary walks in primeval settings. Ann Shuffler became the new editor of Coraddi our senior year. We had both been nominated as staff candidates . . . both art majors. Shuffie was considered the most level-headed (even *I* voted for her). As managing editor . . . a kind of retirement without pension, I had nothing to do. I was a Masquerader and one of the pillars of light crew. I went to only one meeting of Quill Club.

This year, Coraddi devoted one of its issues to the writing material from the Arts Forum. As Shuffie put it under the Editor Comments: "The Social Science Forum and Arts Forum . . . are, we believe, of prime importance to every student who wishes to lead a full life or any kind of life for the next forty years; and in order to help you prepare for these forums and to know what to expect we have printed two articles . . . The forums also offer you an opportunity to show that our school has a type of school spirit of broader scope and greater value than mere exercise of vocal power." Shuffie never was very talkative. . . .

We graduated and turned the magazine over to Winnie Rodgers (another sister of Mildred's). The names of Nancy Shepherd, Betsy Waldenmaier, Jean Farley, Mary Elliot are not unknown to you. From now on I think your memories will serve you better than mine. Has this been enough history for one day, dear editor? Oh, you want to know what I am doing still at W.C. — well, the summer of '49 found me travelling to California. I met Mr. Ivy in Hollywood where he proposed that I investigate the Graduate School. I did. Back in the harness meant, automatically, back in Coraddi harness, too.

Within the next month or so, I expect to say a few fond words over the body of the student in me, and welcome in whatever new thing will fill the gap. If you ever want to hear more (I've skimmed the surface only) it won't be in a Coraddi. I'll tell you in confidence someday, eh?

Damp Leaves Won't Crackle

by Marilyn Robinette

JOE pushed the door open and somewhere in back a little bell rang as he walked in. The greasy-steamy smell really hit us coming in out of the morning cold like that, and the aluminum coffee-maker over near the big plate window was beginning to steam up the glass and make the plate seem hotter and smaller than ever. The grill was empty except for a wrinkled-looking man in a brown leather jacket with "Crunch-O Co." stencilled on the back. He was hooking his last five-cent bag of fresh potato chips onto a stand at the corner, and on the way out he touched his cap and nodded at us with a kind of pained expression.

"Arthritis," I said, "prob'ly," and I propped up against one of the leather stools and tore the wrapper off a piece of Dentyne. Joe leaned over the lunch counter and aimed his voice at the swinging doors that went back to the kitchen. It sounded loud.

"Mother."

In a minute the doors swung open and she came out. She was a great big blustery woman. When she opened her mouth to speak, you could see the brown stuff that had collected on her teeth, and if you got too close to her when she was talking, you didn't have to see it to know it was there. And she had the biggest hands. I had noticed them every time she lit a cigarette or sloshed a cup of coffee over the counter. The end of her thumb and forefinger were the same brownish-yellow — I reckon because she never ducked her cigarette till the smoke was coming out both ends.

I had only been in the bus station grill a couple of times before — with Joe — and those were the only times I ever saw her. But she was always sending for Joe, sending a colored boy on a bicycle to look for him, or one of the cab drivers who hung around there. Lots of times it would be when we were playing football in the afternoons on the lot down from the high school. The colored boy or the cabbie would come, and when Joe looked up and saw one of them—they never yelled over there to him—he'd stop, no matter what, and go with the guy. He never said anything 'cept, "See you fellas."

Joe called the plays and was captain of the Blues, so we never did much after he left. Usually we'd get our stuff and go. And, walking home, the fellas would cuss old Katie and say some pretty awful things about her.

At first I don't think Mother and Aunt Nell thought very much of the idea of my going around with Joe. And it was on account of her. You know how, when you bring a new fella over for supper or take a different girl out, they always want to know, first thing, what their daddy does and where they live. It would've been much better if I could have told them that Joe's daddy was a vice-president at the bank and his mother was a D.A.R. But Joe's daddy was dead and old Katie — in a blue uniform that was too tight all the way around her, and with her frizzy brown hair pulled up in a net — worked in the bus station grill. And they had just moved into one of the little apartments of the government project over in a pretty rough section.

But the more I brought Joe home, the more I think they got to liking him. Once after he had left, I heard Mother tell Dad that it was "really surprising that he's such a well-mannered child, considering . . ." and she dropped it there.

"Considerin' old Katie?" I thought I'd try finishing it for her. But all the answer I got was a look that meant I wasn't supposed to have heard.

I reckon nobody much liked old Katie, or else they just didn't care. She was pals with most of those cabbies, though, and the Italian cook back in the kitchen and some of the soldiers and guys that rode the bus regularly and stopped in our town. But I liked her all right. I don't know why, except she was Joe's mother.

Standing there now, Katie nodded briefly at me and began to fish around in her pocket for a cigarette.

"Did you get the milk off the stoop, son?"

Joe said yes, ma'am, he had, and lit her a match from the book he found at the other end of the counter before he went on talking.

"Kenny and Mr. Barton, Mother, asked me to go with them huntin' this afternoon out near White's Pond." He blew out the match. "Kenny's brother's got a new twenty-two he said he wanted me to try. Mike and Will are goin' and Mr. Barton is takin' us in their station wagon. We'll probably be back about seven."

"Not any later than seven," I said. "And we'll be real careful with the guns, 'specially since Dad's along. Maybe we'll bag you a rabbit for supper!" But I guess I sounded too enthusiastic, because she just looked at me funny for a minute and turned back to Joe.

"I asked you to rake those leaves out on the side last week sometime."

"I did . . ."

"The leaves fell again, didn't they? And there's a light in the kitchen I wanted you to wire up and the weak place on the steps. You told me yourself you'd do it and it's Saturday and you ain't doin' it on Sunday. If you'd just not be so damn . . ."

"O-*kay*, Mother. I'll stay."

I slid down off the stool and Joe buttoned up his jacket like he was leaving, but he didn't.

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An Introduction to . . .

Robert Penn Warren

Novelist and poet who will be writing critic for the Eighth Arts Forum in March

THE names *Understanding Fiction, All the King's Men,* and *World Enough and Time,* mean something; they mean a textbook for Advanced Composition, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and Academy Award-winning movie, and an historically documented novel of a Kentucky tragedy which is currently a best-seller — and they mean Robert Penn Warren. Four years ago, in the Arts Forum writing panel of 1947, red-headed, informal "Red" Warren won the esteem of student poets and prose writers as he criticized and discussed the work published in CORADDI. At that time, just before this college generation, Warren was known as a critic, educator and poet, having already published some volumes of poetry and several novels. In these four years the reading public has watched Warren come from a relatively unknown writer to one of the ranking novelists in America today. This year the Woman's College welcomes Robert Penn Warren back as visiting critic of writing in its 1951 Arts Forum.

Criticized for tendencies to fill his work with historic particulars, he builds his work on knowledge of the language, traditions and problems of his native Southland; at the same time it is inclined toward overstatement and melodramatics. Both of Warren's recent books, *All the King's Men* and *World Enough and Time* have been put into the category of biography, political histories, and philosophy by their critics; but both of them contain the same basic theme with which his writings for the past twenty years have been concerned—the story of man's effort to discover his true relation to evil, a conception of Original Sin which is also the central theme of most of his poetry.

Both novels are of great personal tragedies, great in their conception and their philosophy; *World Enough and Time* has been called a book of "immense and mature disillusion." It is true in the history of writing that the greatest writers are those capable of skillfully handling a great theme of a purpose or of a faith, and Robert Penn Warren has progressively grown in his ability to handle one of the most universal of themes, man's search for self-knowledge, for his personal relation to evil.

As an editor of textbooks, Warren has worked with Cleanth Brooks in editing *Understanding Poetry.* Some of his best known short stories are contained in the collection *Circus in the Attic,* and rounding out his versatility is his criticism of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner.* Now a member of the faculty of the University of Minnesota and a Rhodes Scholar, Warren is the former teacher of Randall Jarrell and Peter Taylor, who is at present on leave of absence from the Woman's College. With great confidence in his ability and his personality, the Woman's College looks forward to his coming in March.

"EXISTENTIONALISM," *by Mary Gibbs*

Book Review:

Lettie Rogers, whose first novel, *South of Heaven,* was published in 1946 and very well received, is at present teaching Advanced Composition at Woman's College. Mrs. Rogers, who was graduated from Woman's College in 1940, majored in sociology and was an instructor in that department for two years. While convalescing from an attack of flu, Mrs. Rogers started writing—a mystery novel ("now quietly immured in a trunk, having been sent to, and rejected by, all the best publishers"). She then returned to Woman's College and took the writing course under Hiram Haydn. In 1948 she took Peter Taylor's place, teaching writing. *The Storm Cloud* is Mrs. Rogers' second novel.

The Storm Cloud

by LETTIE ROGERS

Random House, 1951

THE CORADDI'S review of Lettie Rogers' first novel, *South of Heaven,* stated that here was not simply ". . . a novel of China, but the story of the impact of the East on the West . . ." In *The Storm Cloud,* set in the midst of 1927 China—". . . Nineteen hundred and twenty-seven — when the attempt to scramble four thousand years into one was being seriously made"—Mrs. Rogers has dealt with the revolution which may be said to have been brought about, partially, at least, by the impact of Western ideas upon the East, and which was to develop, as later events have shown, into a different sort of impact from that of *South of Heaven* of East upon West.

It was in 1927 that Chiang Kai-shek was faced with the choice of compromising with either the Communist wing of the revolutionary party or the old and decadent aristocracy against whom the revolution had originally been aimed. It was in 1927 that he chose the aristocracy as the lesser of two evils; and it is against the background of counterrevolution accompanying his choice that Mrs. Rogers sets her story of Leila, revolutionary leader, who, paradoxically, is also the third and favorite daughter of the fabulous aristocrat, Old Koo.

Educated at Vassar, Leila was a unique revolutionist: she had loved at least a part of the life against which she rebelled. But, in her own words, "I was a slave. Painting a flower, one day, I came to that conclusion. I was just higher up in the hierarchy of slavery that we call family than Tear Drop was. I was beloved of the master—that's the slave's highest hope." And so Leila left the House of Koo and the impending marriage about which she had not been consulted and went to live in Canton with the group who became known as the "Bright Young Intellectuals." It was there that she became involved with the revolutionary movement, fighting, as she thought, for "democracy—with drastic agrarian reforms."

Betrayed, along with other idealists, by the C.E.C. when the counterrevolution set in, ordered to be executed, Leila is secretly spirited away by her father, who expects her to settle down now in the House of Koo and resume life as a grateful and dutiful daughter. The story of how she escapes from this second prison and finds her way to beautiful and tragic love with the half-caste doctor, Christopher Blair—all of this while frantic searches conducted by her mother and her brother stir the already underlying turmoil of the city, while the people, believing her dead and holding her as a symbol of their cause, prepare a funeral for the corpse of a factory girl and sing their song: "Third Koo Girl, Third Koo Girl, Tall Girl, Tall Girl..."—is one of tense action and dark intrigue told in a swift and penetrating fashion.

It is a major achievement that in a novel so tightly constructed and so quick-moving, Mrs. Rogers has laid a quiet, but powerful emphasis upon the larger aspects of the revolution and the forces which effected it. For to read *The Storm Cloud* is to gain at least some partial insight into the huge and complex hodgepodge of traditions, loyalties, paradoxes, brave new

ideas, and misery which were China in 1927, part of which have been China for four thousand years, and part of which are still undoubtedly China. It is impossible to walk with this writer down the street of Old Koo's provincial city, to listen to the gossip and the curses of the peasants, to see those same peasants standing immobile in a silent, expectant body, waiting for the uncertain outcome of covert events, to listen to the conversation and follow the illusion and the disillusionment of the new liberals without sensing something of the complexity and the decay of a civilization.

It is also a tribute to a large sense of proportion that with a plot alive and complicated enough to sustain itself with little outside help, Mrs. Rogers has gone ahead to give us people who are not simply one-faceted implements by means of which action is carried out, but distinct men and women molded by a multitude of different circumstances and ideologies, showing the influence of those backgrounds in every movement and, moreover, through their diversity, mirroring again the complexity of the conflict in which they move.

First, there is Leila, who, as a child, was ashamed of her large, unbound feet and was ruled by her slave, Tear Drop, who possessed the grace and a kind of beauty which the mistress wanted and would never have. Leila—haunted by a tragic destiny, taking on a tremendous task which she enters perhaps as much through circumstances as through ideals, although the ideals are sincerely hers, laying down that task when she can no longer serve her people to find for the first and the only time a place where she belongs in the love of Christopher Blair. "I gave them the name in Sin-ss-ka Square," she says. "'That night.' I gave it freely to them."

There is Blair, whom those who read *South of Heaven* will remember happily. Son of an American professor and of a sensitive Chinese woman of the old aristocracy, Blair is "sardonic, quiet, accepting his half-caste's estate, long ago, too consciously. He must have felt obligated to love what he should have been free to hate. She [Leila] felt he was prouder than she was—apologizing for something or other by administering to life, as a surgeon. Cutting it open, though, before he sewed it back."

Between these two characters, neither of them quite belonging except with each other, is created a delicately handled love which escapes both sentimentality and sordidness and becomes a sort of spiritual destiny at a time when destiny is running out. "But time isn't going to stand still," Leila says. "I know," replies Blair. ". . . But our time is going to be that time out of time we're always hearing about . . ."

In contrast to Blair and Leila — both products of two civilizations, caught in a conflict of sensations and ideas, is Madame Koo, probably one of the most interesting characters in the book. ". . . Her family regarded her as the omnipotent, the giver and denier of all things. They said she loomed like a mountain over them but, unlike a mountain, she had the power to move. The ways in which she chose to move were, furthermore, often mysterious and always quiet." It is Madame Koo who, when her husband has threatened the security of the family by reclaiming Leila, is ready, if necessary, to murder the daughter who is, secretly, her favorite as well as Old Koo's. It is Old Koo who, accustomed to wielding absolute power, first recklessly brings Leila back to the House of Koo, then, when he discovers that his carefully laid plot has been wasted, that Leila wants no part of the "red silk bed of luxury," in disillusioned, defeated rage orders that should the Third Girl be found, she be brought to him that he may choke her with his own hands.

Among these people move a host of more or less minor characters: Helen, the ornamental, who can use craft almost equal to her mother's if craft be necessary to help her sister Leila; Andrew, who is ashamed of being yellow, who hates and is afraid of himself, who observes and understands perhaps better than others the drama going on before him, but disdains to play a part in it; George, the efficient, the business-minded, who, for reasons of profit, has played a part in the revolutionary movement and who, for reasons

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of safety, would be more than happy to see his sister Leila, a democrat by reason of ideals, out of the way; Tear Drop, hard and bitter through a life much meaner than the one for which she is fitted; Tsi-yuen, or Big Stupid, the little maid who worships Leila, helps her to escape, and in spite of this wins the heart of Old Koo; Mei-kung, Christopher Blair's servant, who, to save his master as he thinks, betrays him.

The author has managed to create through these characters and through the trigger-tense atmosphere of revolution and counterrevolution in which they move a scene of reality at times tragic in beauty, at times heartbreaking in its futility and hopelessness, at times terrifying with the unleashed potential of brutality.

It would always be possible, in a novel, to develop characters more fully; and if the characters are intensely interesting, the desire to see more of them is proportionately strong. It would seem to this reviewer that in *The Storm Cloud* Lettie Rogers has drawn several compelling people, drawn them fully enough for the reader to live with them, to think and to feel with them, and that the unwillingness of the reader to leave them is confirmation of the author's skill. Also, as we have mentioned before, Mrs. Rogers has given a picture not only of a confined number of distinct individuals, but of a conflict which involved millions of poverty-stricken and insecure men and women.

In *South of Heaven* Lettie Rogers displayed considerable skill in handling through a child a rather large question. It would seem to us that in *The Storm Cloud* she handles even more ably a question with a still broader scope. We shall be more than eager to see Mrs. Rogers' next novel.

—Mary Idol

Damp Leaves Won't Crackle

(Continued from Page 11)

Old Katie reached for an ashtray and twisted the cigarette out in it. She rubbed her hands down the sides of her uniform, and, without looking at Joe, she said, "You be careful with the boy's gun and don't let nothin' happen to it." And she went back into the kitchen.

~

Daddy pulled up in front of Morris' Hardware at eleven and blew for Joe and me, who were inside buying shells for the twenty-two. Mr. Morris had to push his glasses down on his nose to count out correct change, and then we ran on out to get in the car with Dad and Mike and Will.

"Anybody can be slow," Mike said. Joe gave him a little push in the face and told him to move his size fourteen shoes over so we could get in. Will said "Shh" and pointed a fat finger at the radio, where Dad had tuned in the State-Kentucky game. So we talked football the fifteeen-mile drive out of town and down highway fifty-nine to where we cut off onto the long dirt road to White's Pond.

It was cold as whiz that day. The sky was one big cloud, low and gray, and the wind really cut. We pulled into the clearing by the lake where Dad usually parked the car, and before we got out, he reached in the glove compartment for an extra pair of gloves that Joe insisted he didn't need. Mike and I got the guns out while Will distributed enough shells for everybody to have a pocketful. Dad lit his pipe and pulled the hunting cap down over his ears before he got out to lock the car and check to see if we three were ready. He took my brother Bill's gun, cocked it, pulled the trigger, and it gave an even little click. Then he handed it back to Joe, who grinned and said it sure was a good-looking gun.

"Plutocrat!" Will thumped the handle with his finger. "And me with this lousy old BB. Just wait till Christmas."

We started through the woods and it was extra quiet, because damp leaves won't crackle under boots. It wasn't five minutes before we saw the tracks and then the rustling in the brush before us and the bundle of brown fur that stopped dead in its tracks like scared animals do to make use of their own built-in camouflage.

"You take this one, Joe," Dad whispered without moving his lips or taking his eye off the rabbit. Joe raised the twenty-two, sighted it, and we all waited a long, still minute before he pulled the trigger. There was a dull "clup" sound . . . The little animal scampered off into the brush.

Joe lowered the gun and looked at it.

"That's funny," Dad said. "The shell was in place and it was cocked."

"And it clicked before," Mike added.

"Maybe I did something to it." Joe was still staring down at it in his hands.

Dad took it and aimed at the same place in the brush where the rabbit had been a minute before. He pulled the trigger, and it made the same dull sound.

"It's never been fired before," I said. "Prob'ly needs a grease job." And Dad handed it back to Joe.

After awhile Will suggested we split up in pairs—five together was too many—and meet back at the car by six-fifteen. Joe and I didn't see rabbit one after that. We heard the crack of guns over to our left a couple of times, but even following up the few tracks we found got us nowhere. Pretty soon it began to sprinkle a little, which wasn't too bad since we were under the thick, tall trees. Joe wasn't saying much, and I could tell he must have felt pretty bad about the gun. But it certainly wasn't his fault.

We decided to start back about five-thirty. The wind was beginning to rip through the woods and blow the wet drizzle down in our faces. Besides, we wanted to get on back and see what luck the others

had had. There had been more shots — in Mike and Will's direction this time.

We met them coming through the woods. Will was grinning so, you couldn't see his eyes, and swinging by the tails he had two big buck rabbits. He'd gotten one in the leg, the other through the shoulder in pretty neat, clean shots.

"But, man, you should've seen the one that *I* missed!" And Mike held up his hands with about two square feet of nothing between them.

". . . 'that got away' is what he said the time we went fishing," Joe said, and winked at me.

About that time the bottom fell out. A big gust of wind tore down from the sky and brought great, huge drops that fell in sheets. We made a run for it. Will is kind of fat, and he puffs when he runs and gets behind. I looked back once to motion him to come on, and he was coming through the woods still grinning, the bloody drops that fell from the dangling dead rabbits being washed away as soon as they hit the ground.

Dad was already in the car when we got there, knocking the wet ashes out of the bowl of his pipe. He grinned back at Will and said he'd been no luckier than Joe and me. We dried off the guns, piled them in the back, and shook the water out of our hair, while Will tied his loot onto the fender.

I've never seen it rain any harder. The windshield wipers went like whiz, but still Dad was having trouble seeing the road — everything was so gray. We were right up on the huge mud puddle before Dad saw it, and when he veered around to miss it, the back of the car slid easily and quickly off into the ditch.

We were no more than two miles down the road and it was seven o'clock then. The back wheels spun and dug into the mud when Dad tried to pull out, so we got out to push. It took us ten minutes and a heck of a lot of hard labor in that pelting rain to see that the wheels were too far in for us to get out.

There was a ramshackled old tobacco barn about fifty yards over in a field — with planks in it, as Joe pointed out — so he and I took out through the wet broomsage. We ripped out two half-rotten boards from one side of the shack and started back. The rain had let up a little and had settled into a lighter, steadier beat. It was beginning to get dark.

"What do you reckon Katie's gonna say?" I said. I was dragging one of the planks behind me.

Joe, with the other one under his arm, was watching his shoes make a loud sucking sound with every step.

"Funny," he said, "that that was the only thing she told me."

"What?"

"To be careful with the gun."

"Aw, I didn't mean *that*. My gosh, there's nothing wrong with that gun a good simonizing won't fix. You never had a chance to knock it out of whack, anyway. I meant about being late."

"Oh. Nothin' probably. Her bark's usually worse than her bite. She won't care. Forget it. Hey, you fellas, this oughta do the trick." He held the plank up over his head.

It did. And by the time we had gotten the car out of the ditch, shaken off what water hadn't soaked in, and climbed back into the car, the rain had switched back into that slow little drizzle, like at first.

"Now ain't that just our luck!" Mike pulled off his rain-soaked boots, making it a point not to look over at Will, who was holding his nose and making a face.

The street lights were on, and the neon signs flashed double with the reflection from the wet, black streets. It was eight-thirty as we drove into the south end of town.

Dad reached to tune down the radio before he glanced back and said, "Joe, o.k. to take you home first?"

"Oh, no." Joe leaned up in his seat. "No, that's o.k. I mean, I'll just get out anywhere—up here in front of Falls Drug."

"You've had enough rain today, boy." Dad turned down Grimes Street toward the government project apartments.

"But this puts you out of your way." He leaned further over. "I tell you, let me walk from this next corner. It's only two blocks."

"What's two blocks? If it weren't for you boys, I'd still be thirty miles down a muddy road."

Joe settled back silently till we turned up Hoover Street where he lived. The apartments were all shaped like the little red hotels my brother found in our Monopoly set to play with. There was a street light on the telephone post in front of the one Joe and Katie lived in, and under it, parked at the curb, was a Yellow Cab.

Joe sat up again. "This'll be fine," he said quickly, "I'll get out here."

"It's up further, isn't it?"

"Yeah, but——"

And as we drove up behind the Yellow Cab, the light over the stoop came on, and the door opened. Katie was standing there behind the screen. From the dim stoop light I could see that her hair wasn't in the net, but hung long down her back, and she had on a pink silk thing, and her lipstick looked purple and greasy.

"Thanks a lot, folks. I enjoyed it. 'Preciate it, Mr. Barton. See you fellas." Joe was fighting with the door handle. He was halfway out of the car when Katie yelled.

"I thought you said you was gettin' back at seven."

"We got . . ."

"Well, never mind. I might've known. You can go on downtown to get your supper, now."

Joe drew back in the car a little.

"And Minnie's expecting you over there for the night. Thank the man for the ride."

And as soon as she shut the door, the porch light went back off. Daddy shifted into low, and we drove on up the street to take Will home. None of us looked at Joe.

Patricia's Mother

(Continued from Page 8)

gifts she quietly told her mother what they were for. These were gifts for her new home from people who wished her a happy married life. Mrs. Williams was amazed.

"Why, Patricia, you have to take those things right back. You aren't really getting married, you know."

"Oh, yes, Mother, I really am."

"But you're going to college, aren't you?"

"No."

"But what are these things for? Why did you bring them home?"

"They are wedding presents, Mother. Your only daughter is being married August 15th."

"You mean it's really going to be—, I mean, you're really going to be married?"

"That's right."

"It isn't a joke you're playing on me? Oh, of course it is, and I don't think it is too funny."

"There is no joke. If you do not allow Dan and me to be married here, we'll go to Georgia."

"Then if you're going to be married, who will marry you?"

"Mr. Swanson, or the Justice of the Peace in Blairsville, Georgia."

"But, but why? What about college? Your daddy and I—"

"Forget college, Mother. You have an invitation to my wedding."

"Why didn't you tell me before? How did everyone else know and I not know?"

Patricia suddenly knew for the first time her mother had realized what she had meant when she said she was going to be married, rather it was the first time her mother had in any way taken her seriously. Acting on impulse, she threw her arms around her mother's neck and hugged her.

"Oh, Mother, I'm so happy."

The next thing Patricia did was to write Dan to engage Mr. Swanson for the ceremony.

Mrs. Williams had not known she had consented to the idea at all. In fact, she was doubtful she even liked the thought of her daughter's marriage. She would have to get used to thinking about it, but first the morning paper must be re-read.

Mr. Swanson's appearance the next week after Dan's approach was a surprise, therefore. He came in, sat down, asked for Patricia after making small conversation with her mother, and began to talk to her about some hour in the morning and where "they" would be. Even though Mrs. Williams was in the room, she did not understand the conversation until she asked questions.

"Are you making plans for the choir, Mr. Swanson?"

"Well, yes, I'm working on that on the side. Someone has to play the organ."

"Well, what are you going to sing Sunday?"

"Oh, we aren't working on that *this minute*. Mrs. Haskins has that all planned. It's the wedding we're talking about."

"You mean Mary Sharp and that Rankin boy's wedding?"

"Oh, no, they're being married in Mr. Bowman's church. It's Patricia's and Dan's wedding we are talking about."

"Oh," Mrs. Williams sank into deep thought and then jumped up with another "Oh!"

"You remember, Mother, the fifteenth of August."

"Yes, yes, of course, but they're just talking, aren't they?"

Mr. Swanson was a trifle surprised and a little embarrassed to be present when the news was broken to Mrs. Williams. He stepped on one foot, then another, then decided to leave.

Patricia smiled at him as he went toward the door. "Remember Friday, the fifteenth at ten. I'll let you know where later."

The next Saturday when Dan came, the young couple went to the county seat and had their blood tests taken for their marriage license.

Mrs. Williams took in the facts slowly. Piece by piece she tried to accept the reality of Patricia's plans. While Patricia went to her first party she understood that it was "that nice young Dan Culbreth" who had been causing all the commotion about weddings. When Patricia came home from the third party, Mrs. Williams looked at the calendar to see when the fifteenth was; it was seven days away. When the license came with the approved blood tests, Mrs. Williams wondered what her daughter would wear when she married. It took the first wedding gift from Dan's family to prove that Patricia had not started to get ready for college. However, when she saw Patricia put a flimsy nightgown into her suitcase, she for the first time began to realize that her only daughter was going away. Mrs. Williams decided it was easiest to dismiss all this gathered information because it worried her, so she occupied her mind about the milk bottles.

Patricia got up early the day before the wedding and prepared the house for the simple ceremony. Carefully she cleaned every corner while she hummed "The Wedding March" to herself. Tomorow this time, she thought, we'll be married. In a few minutes the train will be leaving the station and Dan and I will be on it. After she had the house spotless, she arranged white flowers on the mantel and throughout the living room. Tomorrow night, while these same flowers are still here on this mantel, I'll be far away. I'll be a new person with a new name that's doing new things. She blushed at a thought of the wedding night. Dan had her an apartment. She would be fixing his breakfast the next day. Wonder how he likes his eggs?

Next she packed. This job only took her a few minutes, for she and Dan had decided it would be best if she took only a few things,—Dan's favorite blue dress, a new house dress, and some other little things she had bought with the money her father had given her. In a few weeks they would be back for more of the other things she was leaving. Patricia thought her mother would not like to see too many things leave at once, and Dan had agreed. Dan always agreed when it came to plans about her mother, Patricia observed. He's so considerate about her, she added to herself. After she finished, she slipped the heavy bag under the bed, for it might distress Mrs. Williams to see it packed and ready to go. Patricia did not want to disturb the calm, strange placidness that her mother had held all morning.

She was disturbed by this quietness because it may have meant that her mother was thinking about the next day. Once she had sat for an hour looking at the sofa across the room, making no move or sound. It worried Patricia until she heard the old woman call, "Patricia, did the milkman come today or yesterday? I don't see the bottles."

After the lunch dishes had been washed and the kitchen left clean, Patricia spent the rest of the afternoon baking her father a cake. Her mother hated the kitchen, she knew, and poor Mr. Williams would be doing a lot of his own cooking. Even though, she reflected, he's a pretty good cook—lots of experience. Patricia felt sorry for him. It did not seem to her that Mrs. Williams could take care of her husband.

All day long Mrs. Williams had wandered through the house wondering what Patricia was doing. Satisfied that her daughter was working, she would return to re-read the newspaper, or wander around the little yard. She never offered to help the girl or to question her on the vague fear she had of the next day. Slowly she made her way to the post office twice, once for the morning mail and once for the afternoon mail, calmly overlooking the yellow package cards as she often did light and water bills.

The next morning Patricia was up before usual. She fixed breakfast, eating hers as she cooked for her parents. While her parents enjoyed their coffee, she took a bath. She surprised herself with her calmness and self-control; not quite realizing she was almost ready to enter her new life; but she only hoped she wouldn't lose her composure.

"Mother," she told Mrs. Williams as she dried the last dish, "at nine-thirty Dan's parents are coming. At nine-forty-five, Mr. Swanson will be here. At ten Dan and I are going to be married. May we have the ceremony here? We have the license and Mr. Swanson's ready."

Mrs. Williams only heard the first part of the speech. She knew Dan's folks were coming and that meant company. Company meant good clothes. She would have to change then. Later on she would ask Patricia what else she had said. Now she had to decide which dress to put on. Patricia, knowing her choice would be ignored, made two suggestions. The third and prettiest dress was the one that Mrs. Williams wore.

Patricia dressed herself carefully. She began to get nervous. Things were working out too well. In her nervousness, she ran her hose, but that didn't matter. Quickly she substituted another pair. She put on her make-up expertly and pulled her new dress over her wavy brown hair. I am glad, she thought, as she looked at herself in the mirror, that there will be no one but my parents and Dan's to witness the simplest of ceremonies. There would be no telling what her mother would do, maybe even violence, she added, as she remembered the letter scene of a few months ago.

When she had put the final touches to herself, she walked through the living room to do the last minute straightening. She saw Dan's parents' car turn the corner and excitement rose in her as the Culbreth Plymouth slowed to a stop. Once the Culbreths were in the house, she introduced them to her mother, for even though they lived in the same town, they did not belong to the same church and she knew her mother had forgotten them.

"Oh, yes, Patricia told me you were coming just this morning. How are you? Well, come on in and make yourself at home."

"Thank you very much." Mrs. Culbreth precisely took off her gloves and sat stiffly on the sofa, patting a place beside her for her husband.

Scarcely had the newcomers gotten settled, when Dan came running on the porch. "Good morning, bride," he whispered to Patricia as he sneaked a quick kiss and handed her a corsage of rosebuds. "How's everything?"

"Thank you, my darling. So far everything is fine —too smooth. Dad is going to put the suitcase in the car for me now. The trunk's unlocked, isn't it?"

"Uh-huh."

Patricia was still pinning the flowers on her dress when Mr. Swanson and his little black book arrived, escorted by Mr. Williams, looking out of place in his Sunday suit. Everyone stood as the two men came in the door and they all exchanged rather formal greetings, the Culbreths with their usual exactness and Mrs. Williams mumbling something about being "glad they caught them at home." They were still standing awkwardly, wondering who would make the next move, when Mrs. Williams breathed a sigh and sat down. At a nod from his bride, Dan nervously lurched forward and almost pushed Mr. Swanson to the place Patricia had fixed for him in front of the fireplace.

"Let's begin," he said, and Patricia's face held a little lost look that completely contrasted with the expression of a moment ago. "Mother, you and Daddy stand here, and you two stand here, and, well, we'll stand here. Let's begin."

Dan's hand felt cool and dry to her hot, damp one. Her fingers trembled and she looked at Dan with a look of fear mixed with surprise. She was glad her mother was directly in back of her so she could not see the expression on her face when the true realization came.

Mr. Swanson opened his book, read a handwritten note, and cleared his throat.

"The license?"

"It's behind you on the mantel."

"Very good, we'll begin."

He straightened his shoulders and put on his preaching tone of voice. "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here . . . ."

Patricia's hand squeezed hard on Dan's and through her dampness she could feel his nervousness. It somehow gave her strength. She wondered what her mother was thinking, whether or not she knew what was being done. How she wished she could see her!

"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"

There was a pause as Mr. Williams drew in a long breath, and his answer was very low. Patricia shivered to hear it because it was almost desperate in its hopelessness, "I do." He's going to miss me, she thought. Did her mother hear her father? If so, what would she do now? Surely she heard Mr. Swanson saying:

"I, Patricia Allen, take thee Daniel to be my wedded husband . . ."

Patricia heard someone change positions behind her. Was that Mrs. Williams finally understanding?

The ring lay white and gleaming on the prayer book during its blessing. Patricia was aware of the coldness of the metal as Dan put it on her finger. At last a narrow white gold band representing a lifetime pledge was on her left hand. Did her mother see? There was a sigh behind her.

The prayers came next, and Patricia tried to concentrate on them, to listen as Mr. Swanson said, ". . . that they, living faithfully together, may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them . . ." and they went on and on. Patricia started to tremble as she heard the "Amen."

Mr. Swanson's hand over theirs—". . . let no man put asunder. I pronounce that they are man and wife . . ."

Finally the blessing, and the wedding was over. Mr. Swanson shook hands with Dan and kissed Patricia's cheek as he gave her "best wishes."

"May I kiss my wife?" Dan's voice was not at all confident. Patricia took a quick glance at her mother to see her expression before she closed her eyes for the kiss, but Mrs. Williams' face was turned as she walked across the room toward her usual corner.

"I'm married," rang out into her ears and she whispered, "Husband." She wondered if her mother knew.

Mr. Swanson took the license from the mantel and began to fill in the blanks. "Suppose three of you witness this while I fill in the certificate."

Patricia turned nervously and faced the group. "I know, Mother, you and Daddy and Dan's mother. Is that all right?"

"How lovely," Mrs. Culbreth said for her and her husband, and Mr. Williams nodded in agreement. Mr. Williams brought out his leaky fountain pen, wiped it with his clean handkerchief, and handed it to Mrs. Culbreth, who wrote her name carefully, Mrs. Edith Barry Culbreth. Smiling with satisfaction, she handed the pen and paper to Mr. Williams to take to Mrs. Williams, seated again in the corner of the room. She was busy watching the way Patricia was conducting herself in front of that boy and his parents. She must remember to speak to Patricia about it.

Mr. Williams' cheerful voice brought her back to the others. "It's your turn, Mother, the first thing we can do for our married daughter and our new son. You sign your name here."

"I don't want to sign. I want Patricia to go on to college."

"She can't now, she's married. Didn't you see?"

"Then she's not going to college, then she wasn't packing for college? Did you say she's married?"

"Yes, Mother, I'm married, and I'm the happiest girl in the world. Please sign and make me happier."

Dan's parents looked shocked, not understanding. They had known, but——! Mrs. Culbreth's hand went to her mouth. Dan looked unhappy that this had come up. He hadn't thought about it, but if he had he would have known it would have occurred.

"Please, Mrs. Williams, sign it for me. I promise to make you a good son, and you'll have a gain instead of a loss."

"No, I see no use in it. I wanted Patricia to go to college. I didn't know she was getting married. Is she married, Mr. Swanson?"

The unhappy preacher nodded his yes, and his Adam's apple bobbed up and down with his head.

"It's a trick, I feel sure it's a trick. They didn't tell me; they didn't let me know, now did they — did they?"

"Sit down, Lois," said Mr. Williams sternly, "they told you over and over again. You just didn't want to believe them, so you wouldn't listen. Sign your name or break your daughter's heart. I'll explain later," he ended dramatically.

Mrs. Williams submitted like a child to her husband's command and wrote in her scrawl her name. Under it, Mr. Williams added his signature with shaky jerks.

"Thank you, Mother." Patricia knelt beside her and hugged the big, unresponsive body. "Thank you for— for— well, for everything." The gleam on her wedding band was momentarily dulled.

"Well," said Dan as a few unfilled seconds floated by, "well, let's be going, honey. Mama, you and Dad are going to drive us to the train, aren't you?"

Mr. Swanson folded the paper in his book, gave Dan the certificate, and shook hands all around as Mrs. Culbreth picked up her gloves and pocketbook. Everyone moved toward the door, Dan and Patricia arm in arm. Mrs. Williams followed last, slow and sluggish, not yet fully comprehending.

Patricia loosed herself from her husband's arms as the couple neared the steps. With a trembling hand she brought her father's face down and kissed him on the cheek. Suddenly on impulse she hugged her father and whispered to him, "Take good care of her, Daddy, please." Mr. Williams returned his daughter's affections and assured her he would do his best.

Patricia looked at her mother. She pitied her for her disbelief. Leaving her father, she ran to her and hugged the old woman hard, trying to stir some emotion from the flabby lump. When she kissed the placid, soft, wrinkled cheek, she left it damp. Mrs. Williams had nothing to say, no way to respond.

The two Williamses stood watching the Culbreth car out of sight. Mr. Williams' friendly wave hid his grief. Mrs. Williams had no expression at all—she was just standing. When the car was gone Mrs. Williams remarked, "I could have ridden to the train with them. But they'll be back tonight in time for Patricia to fix supper, won't they? Of course, they were just teasing me about getting married. Well, now the joke is over. I'm going to the post office; maybe there is another letter for Patricia."

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